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AUTHOR Greim, Jeffrey L.
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ABSTRACT

As part of a larger study to examine the usefulness of mentoring as an intervention serving at-risk youth, this study evaluated the implementation of two pilot programs in Saint Louis (Missouri) and Atlanta (Georgia). Both programs were at public agencies aiming to operate large-scale mentoring programs to serve adjudicated youth between the ages of 12 to 17 years. Mentor pairs were to meet for several hours each week with ongoing training and support offered to both mentors and students. The evaluation analyzed how and the extent to which the public agencies at the two sites were able to implement the program model. Evaluation of the programs in their implementation stage found that: (1) with concerted effort, modest numbers of adults can be recruited to mentor adjudicated juveniles, although attracting adults aged 55 years and over is more difficult; (2) mentors and youth will not meet regularly and are not likely to develop relationships without ongoing support of a well-structured mentoring program; (3) at residential program sites, it is possible for juvenile justice agencies to operate well-structured mentoring programs with a major infusion of new resources; and (4) interviews with mentors, youth, and agency staff indicate satisfaction with mentoring programs operated at residential facilities. Fourteen references and five tables are included. (JB)

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Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project

Initial Implementation Report

Jeffrey L. Greim

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Public/Private Ventures
399 Market Street
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PREFACE

The concept of mentoring as a discrete intervention is relatively new within the context of youth-serving programs. Although practitioners and policymakers have embraced the idea that programs can provide youth with supportive relationships, little research evidence currently exists to support this claim. Further, the concept of mentoring shares little common meaning among practitioners and no set of established best practices or operational lessons. To determine the usefulness of mentoring as an intervention in serving at-risk youth, Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) has undertaken a four-year research initiative that addresses the following questions:

1. Are there large numbers of adults with enough flexible time and emotional resources to take on the demands of mentoring at-risk youngsters?

2. Can mentoring be integrated into large-scale youth-serving institutions, such as those in the juvenile justice system?

3. Is there a set of practices or features that roughly characterizes the adult role in an effective mentoring relationship?

4. What levels of training and support activities, services and costs are required to administer mentoring programs effectively? What are "best practices" in these programs--how much training, screening, careful matching and supervision are required or optimal?

5. Will participating in these mentoring programs make important observable changes in the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of the at-risk young people and mentors?

Because no one study can answer all five questions, P/PV's research agenda includes a set of studies that together will provide credible evidence. That agenda includes studies of four Linking Lifetimes programs developed by Temple University's Center for Intergenerational Learning; eight Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs; seven college-based mentoring programs funded by Campus Compact's Campus Partners in Learning; programs sponsored by the Washington, D.C. I Have a Dream Foundation; and the Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project, which matches adult volunteers with adjudicated youth in the juvenile justice system.

This initial implementation report on the Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project recounts the early experience of the two pilot programs, and discusses what this experience suggests about the feasibility of operating large-scale mentoring programs within public institutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public/Private Ventures' Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project is exploring the feasibility of operating large-scale mentoring programs within public institutions to serve and benefit at-risk youth. The two participating sites, in St. Louis and Atlanta, are serving adjudicated youth, aged 12 to 17, who are in the care of the state juvenile justice agencies.[1] As of May 31, 1992, both sites had completed the first eight months of the 20-month project. This report recounts the experience of the two sites during this initial period and discusses what it suggests about the ability of public juvenile agencies to implement large-scale mentoring programs.

PROJECT INITIATION

At the time the Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project was conceived, most mentoring programs were privately funded and operated, and served relatively few at-risk youth. The few programs that had attained any scale were typically collaborative efforts between networks of community organizations and public youth-serving agencies. Prominent examples of this type of collaboration were the BUDDY SYSTEM in Minneapolis, and PROJECT RAISE in Baltimore.

P/PV believes that before mentoring programs can be considered viable tools of public policy, they must be proven both beneficial and feasible to at-risk youth on a large scale. The latter seems unlikely unless public agencies with the mission and resources to serve at-risk youth are willing and able to operate mentoring programs at little marginal cost.

Consequently, the Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project was designed to answer a core set of policy questions about the availability of adult volunteers; the capacity of youth-serving public institutions; the usefulness of mentoring programs to such institutions; effective implementation practices; and whether youth and/or adult volunteers benefit.

The Program Model

The project's program model requires each site to be operated by a youth-serving public agency and assigns to each the goal of making one-to-one matches between 100 adult volunteers and 100 at-risk youth. The matches are to last for one year and matched

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[1] In the juvenile court system, youth are not judged innocent or guilty. They are either adjudicated or not adjudicated. To be adjudicated by the juvenile judge is to be judged in need of some sort of official intervention: probation, referral for service, or commitment to the care of a public juvenile corrections agency. Normally, youth are charged with a crime and brought before a juvenile court judge several times before they are adjudicated and placed in the care of the corrections agency.

pairs of adults and youth are to meet for several hours each week. Mentor support groups and group activities for mentors and youth are to be held periodically to provide ongoing training for the mentors and programwide support for the matched pairs.

The model also stipulates that half the adult volunteers at each site be 55 years of age or older. P/PV wanted to test whether this growing segment of the adult population constitutes an untapped, willing resource for serving at-risk youth. We also wanted to investigate the so-called "double social utility" of intergenerational mentoring programs--the possible benefits of participation for both youth and older mentors (Freedman, 1988; Freedman et al., 1992; Styles and Morrow, 1992).

The model employs two implementation strategies that P/PV's study of mentoring programs suggested would help the public agency meet the model's program goals:

- Developing a network of public, civic, religious and business organizations to help the public agency recruit the desired mix and number of adult volunteers; and

- Assigning agency caseworkers the responsibility of monitoring and supporting the mentoring relationships involving youth on their respective caseloads.

The rationales for these two strategies, and the consequences of the two sites' varying abilities to implement them, will be fully discussed later in the paper.

Selecting a Target Youth Population

After considering several at-risk youth populations, P/PV decided to target adjudicated juveniles in residential programming who were likely to return to their home community at some point during the year-long mentoring relationship. This decision was based on research findings and program experience suggesting that this population might derive particular benefit from the planned intervention, and that a growing number of state juvenile justice agencies might be interested in implementing the program model (Gottlieb, 1988; Schwartz, 1989; Miller, 1991; Eskridge, 1980; Cook and Scioli, 1976; Cook and Scioli, 1976b; Sigler and Leenhouts, 1982; Blackmore, Brown and Krisberg, 1988).

P/PV also hypothesized that the sheltered environment of a residential facility--particularly the limitations it imposed on the youth's movements and activities--might best support the development of a mentoring relationship that would be strong enough to survive and support the youth's transition back to his/her home community.

Site Selection and the Two Participating Sites

The two participating sites were selected through a Request for Proposal process conducted by P/PV during Spring and Summer 1991--a process that included the submission of a written proposal and several site visits by P/PV staff. P/PV spent considerable time

identifying public agencies recognized for quality programming, discussing the proposed program model with them, and determining their ability and willingness to forge a partnership with community groups for recruiting purposes. Fifteen agencies wrote to express interest in the program; nine of these agencies submitted complete proposals. The St. Louis proposal was submitted by the Missouri Division of Children and Youth Services (MDCYS), and the Atlanta proposal was submitted jointly by the Georgia Department of Children and Youth Services (GDCYS) and the Southeast Regional Office of the NAACP.

The St. Louis site was selected primarily because of the MDCYS's national reputation for quality programming, and its willingness and ability to identify 100 juveniles in secure residential programs who would be appropriate for the program. The MDCYS St. Louis region operates five small residential facilities with a combined capacity of 130 beds and an average length-of-stay of about 4.5 months. All the youth served in these facilities are from the St. Louis area.

The relative weakness of this site was that the MDCYS, like most juvenile agencies, was a relatively closed system not readily known by the local community organizations it would approach for help in recruiting the adult volunteers. Nevertheless, P/PV believed that this site would provide a good test of a juvenile agency's ability to implement a mentoring program in a residential setting and would suggest the ability of a typical juvenile agency to recruit adult mentors.

In contrast, the Atlanta site was chosen primarily because the GDCYS and the NAACP were committed from the outset to operate the program jointly, with the GDCYS being responsible for the internal operation of the program and the NAACP being responsible for recruiting adult volunteers. Because the majority of youth served by the GDCYS (69%)--and by juvenile agencies nationwide [about 60% (Flanagan and Maguire, 1992)]--are non-white, P/PV was very interested in investigating the relative ability of a prominent black organization to recruit minority adults.

Although there is never a guarantee of success, numerous researchers argue that common ethnic and racial ties between mentors and mentees appear to be an advantage in forging connections--those ties mitigate barriers to trust and provide youth with role models that look like them (Freedman, 1992; Ferguson, 1990). There was also the prospect that the Southeast Regional Office of NAACP, and possibly the national organization, might collaborate with other juvenile agencies to replicate the model if it were proven to be feasible.

Because the program model stipulated serving youth in residential settings, the relative weakness of this site was the low number of such juveniles it would be able to serve. The GDCYS operates only one secure residential facility in the Atlanta area, the Lorenzo Benn Youth Development Center. Although it has a capacity of 105 beds, it serves youth from throughout the state and has relatively few from the Atlanta area.

This meant that only about 30 percent of the youth participating in the Atlanta mentoring program would be in a secure residential setting. The remainder would be adjudicated youth living with their families in the community but still the responsibility of and served by the GDCYS. While P/PV anticipated that operating a mentoring program in the community setting would present greater implementation challenges for this site, we believed that the site's experience in this setting would provide an interesting contrast to the experiences of both sites with youth in a secure residential setting.

To help defray the cost of implementing the model, each site received a $65,000 grant from P/PV. They used the money primarily to hire a project director--the only new staff person hired at either site to work on the project.

The youth served by the two juvenile agencies have similar characteristics. They range in age from 12 to 17; the average age is 15. About 90 percent are male. In St. Louis, 62 percent are black; in Atlanta, 68 percent. At both sites, the youth had been arrested repeatedly prior to being placed in the care of the state agency. The committing offenses were typically crimes against property.[2]

The Research Design

The project's research component includes three separate but related studies designed to determine the feasibility of the project's program model. The implementation study will analyze how and how well the public agencies at the two sites are able to implement the program model; the relationships formation study will describe the intensity and quality of the relationships between juveniles and their adult mentors; and the outcomes study will explore the potential benefits of program participation for both youth and adults.

TESTING THE MODEL

The sites have been making matches since November (Atlanta) and December (St. Louis) 1991. Table 1 provides information on matches made and dissolved at each site from inception through May 1992.

At this stage of the project, it is impossible to reach definitive conclusions about the mentoring programs' possible benefits for participating youth. To date, too few matches have been made and most mentors and youth have been meeting for a relatively short time. However, the initial experiences of the two sites do suggest possible answers to other core policy questions the project is addressing--particularly whether large numbers of adults will volunteer to work with at-risk youth and whether public youth-serving agencies can operate large-scale mentoring programs without a major infusion of new funds.

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[2] The "committing offense" is the youth's offense that results in his/her being placed in the care of the juvenile justice agency.

Table 1

MATCHES MADE AND DISSOLVED EACH MONTH BY SITE

MATCHES	MONTH						
	1991		1992				
	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
St. Louis							
At START of Month	*	0	2	12	8	31	37
MADE in the Month	*	2	13	0	25	6	5
DISSOLVED in the Month	*	0	3	4	2	0	1
At END of the Month	*	**2**	**12**	**8**	**31**	**37**	**41**
Atlanta							
At START of Month	0	6	10	27	27	36	31
MADE in the Month	6	4	17	4	13	1	14
Dissolved in the Month	0	0	0	4	4	6	3
At END of the Month	**6**	**10**	**27**	**27**	**36**	**31**	**42**

* The St. Louis site did not begin operations until December 1991.

These two questions will be discussed separately in Chapters II and III. Chapter IV describes responses to the program by agency staff, mentors and youth. Chapter V summarizes what has been learned from the project to date and the key policy questions that remain unanswered.

II. RECRUITING ADULT VOLUNTEERS TO WORK WITH JUVENILE OFFENDERS

P/PV's previous investigations of mentoring programs suggest that relatively few mentoring programs, particularly those not operating in public schools, have been able to recruit 100 or more adult volunteers. In cases where this was accomplished, the recruitment effort typically involved the active participation of a network of public, civic and religious organizations with ready access to large numbers of potential volunteers.

P/PV's investigations of intergenerational mentoring programs also indicated that most mentoring programs involving elders were relatively small and short-lived. Even the relatively well-funded Linking Lifetimes program sponsored by Temple University's Center for Intergenerational Learning required close to a year to recruit the first 15 to 20 elders participating at each program site. That recruiting large numbers of elders might require extra resources was further suggested by the size of the $250,000 grant made by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America to recruit 160 elders for a school-based mentoring program serving elementary school students. Only the Older American Volunteer Programs run by ACTION, which are comparatively well-funded and have been operating for more than 20 years, have consistently attracted large numbers of older volunteers to work with youth. These programs include the Foster Grandparent and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (Freedman et al., 1992).

Nevertheless, P/PV set the recruitment goal for each site at 50 non-elders and 50 elders, the minimum threshold, in our opinion, for testing the feasibility of recruiting for and operating a mentoring program that could be considered large-scale.

The number and age mix of the adult volunteers recruited at both sites through May 31, 1992, are shown in Table 2. These data and the recruitment experience of the two sites suggest that modest numbers of adult volunteers can be recruited to work with adjudicated youth. Through persistent efforts, both sites have been able to meet the model's goal of recruiting and matching 50 non-elder adults. This is particularly significant in St. Louis because the MDCYS has not received the active support of a community organization, let alone a collaborating network.

However, neither site has yet been able to recruit and match a significant number of elder volunteers. This outcome suggests that recruiting elder volunteers to work with adjudicated youth is more difficult than recruiting non-elders, and that their successful recruitment may require relatively more resources and possibly different strategies.

Table 2

DATA ON MATCHES BY SITE
(As of 5/31/92)

ITEM	ATLANTA	ST. LOUIS
Total made matches	59	51
Total terminated matches	17	10
Total current matches	42	41
Current matches involving:		
Elder Mentors (55 or over)	2	2
Non-Elder Mentors	40	39
Number of mentors in the pipeline[a]	42	7
Elders (55 or over)	13	0
Non-Elders	29	7
Type of programming for matched youth		
Residential	12	34
Community	30[b]	7[c]

[a] These are volunteers who have completed training.
[b] Includes four youth who have been released from residential programs and are living in the community.
[c] These are youth who have been released from residential programs and are living in the community.

Recruiting Non-Elders

To successfully recruit 50 non-elder adult volunteers, each site has employed similar recruitment strategies, including obtaining media coverage of the program and making program presentations to numerous groups of potential volunteers. For example, each site has been featured on segments of local TV news broadcasts and/or community affairs programs, discussed on radio talks shows, publicized through public service announcements on radio and TV, and highlighted in numerous articles appearing in local newspapers. In all cases, these media events have included information on how interested adults could volunteer for the program. In fact, the single most successful recruitment event at both sites was the first feature article on the program that appeared in each of the city's major daily newspapers; the article in The St. Louis Post Dispatch resulted in about 15 adults becoming mentors and an article in The Atlanta Constitution led to the enrollment of about 30 volunteers.

Each site has also made many program presentations to community leaders and to members of various community service organizations, including black fraternities and sororities; corporate retiree organizations; public employee associations; and civic organizations, such as the Urban League, NAACP, Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary.

While neither site has been able to develop a formal network of community groups, it is clear that the stature of the NAACP has made it much easier for the Atlanta site to engage community service organizations in discussions about the project and their possible involvement in the recruitment effort. For example, when the NAACP invited prominent community and religious organizations to an initial organizing meeting, representatives from over 20 organizations attended. In contrast, only one representative attended a similar meeting held in St. Louis and only seven representatives attended a second meeting chaired by the state director of the MDCYS.

Three factors--all related to the efficacy of the program and the public agency itself--seem to be working against MDCYS efforts to enlist the active support of community organizations. First, like many juvenile justice agencies, MDCYS is a relatively closed system. As a result, the community leaders and community organizations it has been trying to engage are largely unaware of its reputation as a leader in the juvenile justice field. Second, the mentoring program was unknown to the community and was based on the untested premise that adult volunteers can readily develop beneficial relationships with juvenile offenders. Third, community leaders have been somewhat apprehensive about the safety of adult volunteers who would be working on a one-to-one basis with adjudicated juveniles.

It is therefore a credit to the MDCYS and a tribute to the persistence and energy of the project director that the St. Louis site has been able to implement the recruitment strategies discussed earlier, and to meet the project's goal of recruiting 50 non-elder volunteers. This site in particular has discovered the benefits of having participating mentors

and juveniles speak during program presentations. Their testimonials seem to reassure audiences that relationships can develop between juveniles and adult volunteers, and that the participating juveniles--while having made some mistakes in the past--are not necessarily dangerous people, and are generally interested in leading productive lives.

However, the site's recruitment accomplishments have not been without cost. With limited resources to recruit volunteers from the community and to develop and implement the program internally, the St. Louis site has alternately emphasized planning and executing these varying recruitment efforts, and training and matching recruited volunteers. This cycle is partly reflected by the relatively few volunteers currently in the process of being matched--seven volunteers, compared with 42 waiting to be matched at the Atlanta site. It remains unclear whether St. Louis, without additional help from community groups or additional internal resources, can continue to develop effective one-time recruitment events, train and match adult volunteers, and still effectively operate a mentoring program that is getting larger and more complicated.

Finally, the racial and gender composition of the matched mentors at each site, shown in Table 3, suggest that both sites have had initial success recruiting minority mentors, and to a lesser extent, minority males. Projectwide, 74 percent of the mentors are black and 38 percent are black males; 68 percent of the participating youth are black and 56 percent are black males. As a result, very few cross-race matches have been made between blacks and whites, and only a limited number of cross-gender matches have been made between black female mentors and black male youth. The initial data also suggest that the Atlanta site has had more success recruiting minority males than has St. Louis. However, these data may simply reflect differences in the two sites regarding attitudes on the appropriateness of cross-gender matches and/or the expressed preferences of the adult volunteers.

Recruiting Elders

Both sites have had great difficulty recruiting adult volunteers aged 55 and over. As of May 31, each site had recruited and matched only two elder mentors; three of the four are still participating in the program.

Because of the importance it placed on the recruitment of elders, P/PV decided in April 1992 to begin offering a $50/month stipend to volunteers who were 55 years of age and over. While not a large amount, this is comparable to the stipends offered to elders by other volunteer programs.[3] The intent of the stipend is to encourage elders with limited financial means to consider the program and to cover any incidental costs of participation--particularly for elder volunteers with social and economic backgrounds similar to

[3] For example, one of the Linking Lifetime sites P/PV studied offered volunteers $10/week and the Foster Grandparent Programs offer volunteers $2.35/hour plus meals and minimal health services (Styles and Morrow, 1992; Freedman, 1992).

Table 3

RACE AND GENDER OF MENTORS
(By Site and Overall)

	St. Louis	Atlanta	Overall
MALE			
Black	31%	47%	38%
White	15%	18%	16%
Other	3%	0%	2%
FEMALE			
Black	41%	29%	36%
White	10%	6%	8%
Other	0%	0%	0%

the youth's. Because little time has elapsed since the stipend was first offered, it is not yet possible to draw any definitive conclusions about its effectiveness as a strategy for recruiting elders.

The initial indications that can be drawn from the recruitment experiences of both sites are that elders may not respond to the same recruitment strategies that successfully attract non-elder mentors: general coverage of the program in the media, and large one-time program presentations. Both sites have employed these strategies to attract elders without appreciable success.

The MDCYS has also been unsuccessful in its efforts to enlist the support of prominent elder groups in the St. Louis area to help it more effectively reach potential elder volunteers. P/PV's interviews with representatives of some of these groups--including local chapters of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and the County Office of Retired People--suggest that their reluctance to get involved in the project is based in part on their belief that the mentoring program would not be attractive to their constituents because of the perceived danger of working with juvenile offenders. Their reluctance was also due to the difficulty they had experienced several years ago recruiting elder mentors for a school-based program primarily serving female high school students.

In contrast, the Atlanta site, through the efforts of the NAACP, has gradually been able to enlist the help of several prominent elder organizations in the Atlanta area--particularly AARP, RSVP and the Fulton County Agency on Aging. As a result, this site now has five older volunteers helping it recruit elder mentors. Whether the different responses of the elder groups in Atlanta is due to the NAACP's involvement in the program, or the fact that the Regional Offices of the AARP and RSVP are in Atlanta, or to some combination of other factors, is unclear at this time.

In any event, with these additional resources, the Atlanta site has begun implementing a promising recruitment strategy that was used during May 1992 to recruit elders from eight of 40 targeted black churches in the Atlanta area. The recruiter first met with church leaders at their offices and attended various church functions to gain their confidence and support, and to learn more about their activities and their membership. Only then, with the support of the church leaders, have presentations about the mentoring program been made to the elder church members. In effect, the repeated contact between the older recruiter and the potential volunteers seems to legitimize the mentoring program for older adults in a way that single group presentations or written program materials cannot.

This strategy is largely responsible for bringing in 20 elders who recently completed mentor application forms; 13 of them attended a mentor orientation and training session. However, it remains to be seen whether these volunteers persist and actually become

mentors, and whether the initial success of this strategy can be replicated at the other targeted churches.

Even if the personalized recruitment strategy proves effective, the extra time and effort required to implement it suggests that the goal of recruiting equal numbers of elders and non-elders to mentor adjudicated youth may be incompatible with the goal of building a large-scale mentoring program serving juveniles. As will be seen in the next chapter, however, the extra effort may be worthwhile. The flexible time of most elders may allow them to play invaluable roles in portions of large-scale mentoring programs that can be effectively implemented only during normal working hours, time when most non-elders cannot participate.

III. PUBLIC YOUTH-SERVING INSTITUTIONS' ABILITY TO OPERATE LARGE-SCALE MENTORING PROGRAMS WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT NEW RESOURCES

P/PV's earlier research (Styles and Morrow, 1992) indicated that to operate an effective mentoring program, the public agency at each site would have to perform tasks that include:

- Providing practical training to mentors and youth regarding the purposes of the match, and the guidelines governing their interactions. For mentors, providing practical information about the youth's backgrounds and how they are likely to act at the outset of the match;

- Closely monitoring the matched pairs--particularly at the outset of the match--and providing timely support on an individual basis. This support typically involves encouraging either participant when s/he is discouraged about the match, and suggesting possible mentoring activities based on the needs and interests of the youth; and

- Providing group activities and mentor support groups that give programwide assistance to matched pairs of volunteers and youth.

Without extra funds to hire new staff to perform these tasks, both sites have given most of these responsibilities to existing public agency staff. In particular, many agency caseworkers have been assigned the tasks of matching, monitoring and supporting individual mentoring relationships involving the youth on their respective caseloads. It is hypothesized that caseworkers can best perform these critical tasks because they are currently responsible for coordinating all agency services for youth, and are in regular contact with them.

Also, agency supervisors have been assigned responsibility for ensuring that the caseworkers are adequately performing their new tasks, and that mentoring program information is provided on a timely basis to the project director and other agency managers responsible for the program's implementation. Finally, some agency support staff have been given the extra tasks of working with the project director to provide up-front training to volunteers, youth and, if possible, parents; to conduct group activities for youth and mentors; and to schedule regular mentor support group meetings. The ability of existing agency staff--particularly the individual caseworkers--to perform these new duties is a major question for the project.

At this early stage, this question cannot be conclusively answered. Both sites have experienced a long start-up phase during which each has developed and trained staff on new program procedures and incrementally assigned staff new responsibilities. This process

was only fully completed at both sites in April 1992. Both sites are continuing to develop new strategies to address recognized program gaps and new problems as they are identified.

However, the program experience at both sites suggests that public agencies can operate mentoring programs that effectively support matches without significant new resources when they are operated at the residential facilities where the participating youth reside. The structure and operating hours of residential programs seem to enable existing staff to more easily perform their new assigned tasks, and create programwide supports for matches that supplement staff efforts. Conversely, the Atlanta site has had great difficulty operating the community portion of its program, which operates in a relatively unstructured setting using existing resources. Logistical problems inherent in this fluid setting seem to limit the ability of caseworkers to make and adequately support matches, and appears to increase the level of support these matches require.

These experiences are reflected in the very different rates at which mentors and youth are meeting in the residential and community settings. Table 4 contains data on the frequency of mentor/youth meetings during a five-week period from April 27 to May 31. In the residential setting, 78 percent of the matches met during three of the five weeks. In contrast, only 23 percent of the matches in community settings met this often. The infrequency with which the community matches are meeting is in large part responsible for more than one-third already having been dissolved (14 of 40).

MENTORING PROGRAMS OPERATED AT SECURE RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

In both St. Louis and Atlanta, the relative success of the mentoring programs operating at secure residential facilities seems to be related to two key factors. The first is that both the agency caseworkers and the youth are regularly at the facility during evening hours and on weekends--when it is convenient for most adult volunteers to participate.

In addition, mentors and caseworkers can meet relatively easily during the caseworker's normal working hours. At both sites, this has allowed for the development of a supplemental training and interviewing process that addresses the needs of both the volunteers and the caseworkers. Early in the project, some volunteers and caseworkers at both sites felt that mentor training had not provided enough specifics about the operation of the mentoring program and the characteristics of the juvenile population. Caseworkers also wanted to be able to base their matching decisions on some direct contact with the adult volunteer.

Both of these concerns have been addressed by having the screened and formally trained volunteer make at least one visit--and, in some cases, a series of visits--to the residential facility to meet with the caseworker who will be making the match. During these visits, the mentor tours the facility and is instructed on its individual operating procedures. The caseworker and volunteer also have a pre-match interview/dialogue to discuss the

Table 4

FREQUENCY OF MENTOR/YOUTH MEETINGS BY PROGRAM SETTING

(During five-week period from 4/27/92 to 5/31/92)

	Residential Setting	Community Setting
Percentage of Matches Meeting During Three or More Weeks	78%	23%
Percentage of Matches Meeting During Less Than Three Weeks	22%	77%

mentoring program in general and possible youth with whom the volunteer might be matched. This process allows the volunteer to learn more about the programming, staff and youth at a particular facility; it also allows the staff to get a better sense of the prospective mentors for matching purposes. In the residential setting, it is also relatively easy for the caseworker to schedule and orchestrate the initial meeting between a tentatively matched youth and mentor, and to stay in contact with the mentor while the youth remains in the facility.

Additional benefits of the residential setting have been inadvertently uncovered at the St. Louis site. To make the operation of the program even simpler from the agency's perspective, St. Louis mentors meet with their youth during one of two two-hour meeting periods regularly scheduled each week--one on a week night, and one during the weekend.[4] At some facilities, these meeting times are scheduled around or during family visiting hours.

This additional program constraint seems to have several unintended benefits. First, it seems to have established a routine for the mentors and the youth to meet at the same time and place each week. Second, it has made it easier for the agency caseworker to adjust his/her work schedule to be at the facility during these meeting times and to meet regularly with the mentor(s). This is believed to contribute to the slightly higher rate at which caseworkers and mentors are having contact at the St. Louis facilities than at the Atlanta facility. (See Table 5.)

A third benefit is that groups of mentors are congregating at the facilities at roughly the same time and are having incidental contact with one another. This has been particularly important in St. Louis, where the program has held only two mentor support group meetings, each attended by only about 10 to 20 percent of the mentors.

A final benefit is that scheduling mentor meeting hours in close proximity to family visiting hours has resulted in positive contact between mentors and the youth's parents.[5] Parents can play a significant role in supporting or subverting the relationship after the youth is released from the residential facility and returns home. Recognizing this, both sites are inviting parents to attend and participate in the first meeting between the caseworker, the juvenile, and the adult volunteer--the meeting at which the match is made official. However, the results of these efforts have been uneven. Both sites report that involving parents in any facility activity is typically difficult.

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[4] Alternate meeting times are scheduled for mentors who cannot come to the facilities during these designated times.

[5] During focus groups conducted by P/PV researchers, participating youth at the St. Louis site reported that about half of their mentors had met family members on visiting days and that their families were pleased with the program.

Table 5

FREQUENCY OF MENTOR/CASEWORKER CONTACT IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

(During five-week period from 4/27/92 to 5/31/92)

	St. Louis Site	Atlanta Site
Any Contact	57%	45%
No Contact	43%	55%

These outcomes point to the wisdom of structuring mentoring programs to maximize the incidental contact among caseworkers, mentors, youth and their parents to supplement the program's formal activities, which may or may not be fostering these interactions as intended. In combination, these outcomes are thought to be responsible for mentors and youth meeting more frequently in the residential programs at the St. Louis site than at the Atlanta site. During the five-week evaluation period (April 27 to May 31, 1992), mentors and youth in St. Louis averaged 3.9 meetings, while Atlanta mentors and youth in a residential setting averaged only 3.4 meetings.

MENTORING PROGRAMS OPERATING IN THE COMMUNITY SETTING

As anticipated, the Atlanta site is having great difficulty operating the mentoring program in the community setting and adequately supporting community matches. Logistics and resource constraints are making it difficult for the agency caseworker, adult volunteer and youth to establish and maintain adequate contact with one another.

In particular, community caseworkers who are responsible for making, monitoring and supporting the matches keep normal nine-to-five working hours yet typically manage the cases of up to 70 youth. Most of these youth are in "aftercare" and are required only to remain in periodic contact with their caseworker.

Although the Atlanta site has attempted to implement in the community setting the same supplemental process for training and matching volunteers that has been successful in the residential setting, the same benefits have not been realized. Because adult volunteers and caseworkers typically work during the same hours, it has been difficult for them to meet without the volunteer taking time off from work or the caseworker working overtime. As a result, there have been frequent delays in holding pre-match meetings between caseworkers and volunteers who are ready to be matched. In addition, the relative freedom of the juveniles in the community setting and the fact that some of their families do not have phones, has resulted in further delays in holding the initial three-way meeting between caseworker, adult volunteer and youth.

These same logistical problems are also making it difficult for the caseworkers to support the matches once they are made. As one caseworker said, "Just having the youth come see me is hard enough without worrying about whether he is meeting with his mentor." Because the weekly mentor meetings do not take place during normal working hours, there is also no easy way for the caseworker to stay in contact with the mentor. This experience suggests that the ability of the typical community caseworker to provide adequate support to these matches may be limited and that doing so may require additional program resources.

At the same time, the fluidity of the community setting also makes it more difficult for mentors and youth to stay in contact and to meet regularly. Having the program establish a set time and place to meet each week produces more frequent meetings than a

system that allows the pairs to set their own meeting times. Because the meetings can take place in the community at any time and any place, mentors in community matches also do not benefit from casual contact with other mentors, parents and agency staff--contact that seems to provide supplemental support to mentors in the residential setting.

The obvious and immediate challenge for the Atlanta site is to provide its community matches with a program structure that will increase the rate at which they are meeting. Possible solutions suggested by the experiences of other successful mentoring programs include having frequent group activities for mentors and youth, and/or holding regularly scheduled mentor support groups to bolster the commitment of the volunteers. Although they are elements of the program model, neither site has exhibited a ready capacity to hold such events on a regular basis.

Consequently, the Atlanta site is exploring the possibility of operating the community portion of its mentoring program in conjunction with six Community Treatment Centers (CTC) in the Atlanta area and targeting youth attending these programs for mentoring services. The CTCs are community-based programs operated on weekdays by the GDCYS. They serve a total of approximately 150 community youth who are required to attend as a condition of their continued stay in the community.

In the community setting, this change would approximate the beneficial program structure that seems to be supporting matches in the residential settings at both sites. Because CTCs operate into the early evening hours, it might be possible for adult volunteers and caseworkers to meet at these facilities during the caseworkers' regular working hours. Meeting times could be regularly scheduled on specified weeknights when groups of mentors could meet at CTC facilities either to participate in planned program activities or to pick up their youth for an individual meeting. This would allow mentors, youth and caseworkers to come into casual contact on a regular basis, periodically participate in group activities, and create an established routine for when and where to meet each week.

Another possible benefit of this strategy is that the caseworkers at the CTCs have smaller caseloads and different job responsibilities than do most of the community caseworkers currently assigned mentoring responsibilities. Instead of being responsible for providing general services to up to 70 youth throughout the Atlanta-metro area, these site-designated caseworkers serve only youth assigned to their CTC and typically have caseloads of only 15 to 25.

The experience of the Atlanta site in the community setting also suggests that both project sites will faced the challenge of adequately supporting matches started in secure residential facilities once the youth returns to his/her home community.

Several factors will influence how these matches fare in the community setting. One obvious factor will be the actual strength of the match at the time the youth transitions

out of the residential facility. A second will be the ability of the two sites to smoothly transfer mentoring responsibilities from the caseworker who is responsible for the youth in the facility to the caseworker who is responsible for the youth after his/her release. Another will be whether supportive program structures can be developed to enhance and supplement the efforts of the newly responsible caseworkers. A fourth factor will be the possible efforts of the youth's family to negatively or positively influence the future development of the match. Both sites are attempting to develop program strategies to affect each of these factors positively; their interplay and impact on the long-term viability of the matches remains a critical unanswered question.

IV. PARTICIPANT AND STAFF RESPONSES TO THE PROGRAM

To learn more about the implementation and operation of the program model at each site, P/PV conducted a series of group and individual interviews during April 1992 with approximately 50 percent of the participating youth, 20 percent of the mentors and more than 10 line and managerial staff at each site. While not explicitly designed to focus on the interviewed personal feelings, the discussions did provide indications of their initial responses to the program. These responses will be investigated further during the balance of the pilot.

Because participation in the mentoring program is strictly voluntary for both youth and adults, it is significant that interviews with both mentors and youth participating in residential settings indicate that they are generally pleased with the program and have become invested in it. A common sentiment among the youth is that they like mentors to visit them, particularly because "they're not paid to be here." (Only 30 to 40 percent of the youth indicate that their families visit them regularly.)

About three-fourths of the youth report that they will continue with the program once released from the residential facilities and have discussed their plans for continuance with their mentors. Mentors also uniformly report being committed to the program and have creative ideas for working with the youth--working on reading skills, learning to play golf, talking about career choices, keeping a journal, etc.

Agency caseworkers are also generally supportive of the program. They report that the program can provide the youth with a supportive adult relationship to supplement the caseworker and parent(s) now in the youth's life. Staff also report that a mentor can serve as a positive role model--which is particularly important when the youth's parent(s) is not playing this role due to unavailability, substance use or abusive behavior.

Staff also feel that the program helps the agency provide better programming. Reflecting the common sentiment that the caseworkers simply do not have time to solve all the youth's problems, one worker said, "We can just do this practical thing [in working with the youth] but we don't have a lot of time to go deep into [kids' interests and problems]." Staff members feel that a mentor can reinforce the agency treatment that the youth is receiving by offering supportive advice.

Some staff even note that youth in the facilities are easier to deal with since mentors started visiting. One staff person, echoing the sentiment of the youth, said, "[the mentors have] changed the culture of visit day. The notion that someone is not getting paid and cares is important to the youth."

However, a main concern expressed almost uniformly by agency staff is the amount of time and energy required to operate the program. A typical comment is, "You almost

need someone on a part-time basis to coordinate the program" at each residential facility/district office. Since both sites have experienced recent staff shortages, many staff find the time involved in interviewing, matching and monitoring the matches burdensome. In particular, some caseworkers indicate that they do not want to be held accountable for having to contact the mentors who are not meeting with their youth on a regular basis; said one worker, "If [the mentor's] not trying, then I'm not going to try."

Related concerns were expressed by mentors who want to know more about the youth's treatment and/or their role in that treatment, and want more consistent contact with agency staff. These concerns, in combination with those of the staff about not wanting to initiate contact with mentors, suggest that each site--particularly in the early stages of a match--needs to make it as easy as possible for mentors and staff to meet during the regular course of the workers' day and in conjunction with the mentors' meeting with their youth. This is suggestive once again of the benefits of the residential setting and of scheduling regular mentor visiting hours--particularly if the program is going to be operated by existing agency staff.

V. LESSONS FROM THE SITES' INITIAL EXPERIENCES

P/PV's Adult/Youth Relationships Pilot Project is testing the ability of public agencies to operate large-scale mentoring programs to serve at-risk youth, and in so doing, is intended to answer core policy questions about capacity and effectiveness.

Throughout the project, each site has conscientiously attempted to implement the project's program model without significant new resources; each site has hired only one new person, the project director, to help operate the program. To recruit the desired number and age mix of adult volunteers from the community, the sites have implemented a variety of recruitment strategies and attempted to develop networks of collaborating community organizations. To operate the program within the public agency, new procedures have been developed and staff have been assigned new tasks; in particular, existing agency caseworkers have been assigned the critical tasks of matching, monitoring and supporting the mentoring relationships for youth on their respective caseloads.

Because of the magnitude of these recruitment and operations tasks, the effort required to develop and implement them, and the uneven success each site has experienced, the program model has been implemented incrementally--and this process is ongoing. Indeed, at the Atlanta site, the community portion of the program was undergoing critical review as this report was being written.

EARLY FINDINGS

Eight months of program operation is clearly too little time to provide any definitive answers to the core questions the project was designed to answer. However, the initial experiences of the two sites do suggest tentative lessons:

> **With concerted effort, modest numbers of adults can be recruited to mentor adjudicated juveniles; however, attracting adults aged 55 and over is more difficult.**

Both sites have successfully recruited more than 50 adult volunteers through a combination of strategies that include media coverage of the mentoring program and program presentations to groups of potential volunteers. Although not necessary for recruiting this number of non-elders, the participation of a major community organization, such as the NAACP, seems to jump-start recruitment planning and implementation by bringing additional resources and, by association, credibility to the program and the recruitment effort.

Neither site, however, has been able to match more than two elders, because elders have not responded to the media and program presentation strategies that have attracted non-

elders at both sites. Clearly, recruiting large numbers of elders to work with adjudicated youth requires greater effort or different types of appeals.

The recent experience of the Atlanta site suggests that elders may come forward to work with juveniles if approached by fellow elders using an intensive and personal recruitment strategy. These strides suggest that elder mentors may be able to play an important role in large-scale programs--particularly in mentoring youth who attend agency programs during the day, when most non-elders cannot participate. The possible "double social utility" of having elder mentors remains to be determined.

> **Mentors and youth will not meet regularly and are not likely to develop relationships in the absence of ongoing support from a well-structured mentoring program.**

The experiences of the community matches at the Atlanta site strongly suggest that matched pairs of volunteers and youth typically will not meet regularly if left to their own devices. There are simply too many logistical impediments thwarting good intentions. These experiences underscore the conclusions previously reached by Freedman (1992) and Styles and Morrow (1992) that mentoring is hard and that successful mentoring programs must be well-structured.

> **At residential program sites, it is possible for juvenile justice agencies to operate well-structured mentoring programs without a major infusion of new resources.**

In these settings, agency caseworkers seem able to perform their mentoring program tasks adequately within their normal work hours, and to a lesser degree, within their normal work routines. Also, prescribing mentor visiting hours and having them abut or overlap family visiting hours seems to create numerous incidental supports for matches that supplement the efforts of individual caseworkers. In combination, these factors seem to result in most mentors and youth meeting weekly more often than not.

> **Interviews with mentors, youth and agency staff indicate satisfaction with mentoring programs operated at the residential facilities.**

Youth and mentors indicate a commitment to making their matches work and agency staff indicate that mentors can supplement their own efforts to guide and support the youth.

PROMISING PROGRAM STRATEGIES

The early experiences of the two sites suggest that certain program strategies may be effective for operating a large-scale mentoring program:

- **Involve program participants--particularly juveniles--in recruitment efforts.** The testimonials help reassure audiences that adult volunteers can develop relationships with youth, and that juvenile offenders--while having made some mistakes in the past--are not necessarily dangerous people, and are generally interested in leading productive lives.

- **Conduct pre-match meetings between prospective mentors and agency staff at the program sites attended by the target youth population.** These meetings serve the dual purpose of allowing volunteers to learn about the agency and its operating rules, and allowing the agency staff responsible for making the match to learn first-hand about the volunteer's strengths and weaknesses.

- **Schedule regular meeting hours each week when mentors and youth are to meet.** Setting times during which pairs are to meet simplifies the operation of the program for public agency staff and seems to result in mentors and youth meeting more regularly.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The experiences of the two sites leave unanswered major policy and operational questions that must be explored further during the balance of the project. One set of questions relates to the adequacy of the resources available to each site in implementing the program design:

- Does the long start-up period experienced by both sites indicate that additional resources are needed to initially develop and implement a large-scale mentoring program?

- Besides the project director, are additional designated mentoring program staff needed to administer and implement all aspects of the program model adequately--particularly as the program at each site gets larger and as more of the matches started in the residential setting must make the transition to the community setting as the youth return home?

A second set of questions relates to the initial success both agencies have had operating mentoring programs in the residential setting:

- Can mentoring relationships that seem strong in the residential setting--as indicated by pairs of mentors and youth meeting frequently--survive the youth's return to the community?

- What factors are likely to help the relationship survive this transition, and can the public agencies develop programming that accentuates these factors?

- Beyond the general statements of participants and agency staff, what measurable benefits accrue to the participating youth, mentors and public agency?

A final series of questions deals with the ability of public agencies to operate mentoring programs successfully in varying program settings. At this early stage of the project, both sites have had success operating the program in residential settings while using only existing staff. Because most juveniles are not served by residential programs, and because progressive state agencies are seeking community alternatives to residential placement, mentoring programs will be able to serve only a relatively small portion of the juvenile population unless they can be implemented successfully in nonresidential program settings without a major infusion of new resources.

The experience of the two sites suggests that the success they have had in the residential setting is linked to a pair of key program elements found in that setting: 1) agency staff and youth normally being at the facilities when it is convenient for most mentors to visit; and, in St. Louis, 2) prescribed time periods during which mentors and youth are expected to meet. The importance and replicability of these two factors in nonresidential settings remains unclear.

However, because the Atlanta site is exploring the feasibility of operating its community program at Community Treatment Centers (CTC), these issues may get a good test during the balance of the project. If the CTCs prove to be a good anchor for Atlanta's community program, this approach may suggest an effective strategy for operating mentoring programs in nonresidential program settings without the infusion of significant new resources. This possibility would suggest the potential for mentoring programs to serve a much larger percentage of the juvenile population and, possibly, even other at-risk youth populations.

During the balance of the project, P/PV will study the experiences of the two sites to learn more about this possibility and the other implementation issues raised in this paper. P/PV will also explore whether operation of the mentoring program improves the services offered by the public agency, and whether mentors and youth benefit from participating in the program. Overall, this research will shed further light on the feasibility of operating large-scale mentoring programs in public institutions to benefit at-risk youth.

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